

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Apparatus for processing billing information through a switched network telephone system for offering pay per view amenities to a user at an amenity device within a facility, the apparatus comprising:

 a telephone at said facility and connected to said switched network telephone system by a telephone line, said telephone for transmitting and receiving information on said line;

 a line powered card reader connected to said telephone for reading credit cards and extracting billing information therefrom;

 a power supply connected to said line and said card reader for converting power of said line to a power supply voltage with sufficient current to power said card reader;

 a processor connected to said card reader and said telephone for controlling said card reader to extract said billing information from said credit card and for transmitting said extracted billing information on said line;

 a billing computer connected to said telephone system for receiving and validating said transmitted billing information; and

 a central distribution [computer] box located at said facility and connected without said switched network telephone system directly to said amenity device for facilitating the offer of a pay per view offering responsive to said billing computer validation.

2. A method of user access to movies at an amenity location, the method comprising:

 providing a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a movie;

 providing a central billing computer connected to said central distribution computer for validating said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and movie identification information, wherein said user input of billing and movie identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;

offering selectable movie identification information to said user, said movie identification information being stored in said telephone; and

responsive to user selection of said offered movie identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for validation;

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said central distribution computer to offer said movie at said amenity location.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising:

receiving power for said card reader from a line connected to said telephone; and

converting said received power to a selected voltage for said card reader.

4. The method of claim 2 further comprising storing said user billing and movie identification information in said billing computer.

5. Apparatus for user access to movies at an amenity location, the apparatus comprising:

a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a movie;

a central billing computer connected to said central distribution computer for validating said offer;

a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and movie identification information;

a card reader connected to said telephone for reading user credit card information;

data storage means in said telephone for storing said read credit card information;

means connected to said telephone for offering selectable movie identification information to said user, said movie identification information being stored in said telephone;

such that responsive to said user input, said central billing computer validates said user billing and movie identification information;

such that responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructs said central distribution computer to offer said movie at said amenity location; and

such that said telephone communicates with said remote billing computer for said validation responsive to user selection of said offered movie identification information and said stored credit card information.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising:

means for receiving power for said card reader from a line connected to said telephone; and

means for converting said received power to a selected voltage for said card reader.

7. The apparatus of claim 5 further comprising means for storing said user billing and movie identification information in said billing computer.

8. A method for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer to a pay per view offering;

providing a central billing computer connected to said central distribution computer for validating said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and pay per view offering identification information, wherein said user input of billing and pay per view offering identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;

offering selectable pay per view offering identification information to said user, said pay per view offering identification information being stored in said telephone;

responsive to user selection of said offered pay per view offering identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for said validation;

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and

responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said central distribution computer to offer said pay per view offering at said amenity location.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:

receiving power for said card reader from a line connected to said telephone; and

converting said received power to a selected voltage for said card reader.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising storing said user billing and pay per view offering identification information in said billing computer.

11. Apparatus for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location, the apparatus comprising:

 a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a pay per view offering;

 a central billing computer connected to said central distribution computer for validating said offer;

 a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and pay per view offering identification information;

 a card reader connected to said telephone for reading user credit card information;

 data storage means in said telephone for storing said read credit card information;

 means connected to said telephone for offering selectable pay per view offering identification information to said user, said pay per view offering identification information being stored in said telephone;

 responsive to said user input, said central billing computer validates said user billing and pay per view offering identification information;

 responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructs said central distribution computer to offer said pay per view offering at said amenity location; and

 said telephone communicates with said remote billing computer for said validation responsive to user selection of said offered pay per view offering identification information and said stored credit card information.

12. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:

means for receiving power for said card reader from a line connected to said telephone; and

means for converting said received power to a selected voltage for said card reader.

13. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising means for storing said user billing and pay per view offering identification information in said billing computer.

14. A method for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a pay per view offering;

providing a central billing computer for billing of said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and pay per view offering identification information, wherein said user input of billing and pay per view offering identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;

offering selectable pay per view offering identification information to said user, said pay per view offering identification information being stored in said telephone; and

responsive to user selection of said offered pay per view offering identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for said validation.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising:

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and

responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said central distribution computer to offer said pay per view offering at said amenity location.

16. Apparatus for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location, the apparatus comprising:

a central distribution computer connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a pay per view offering;

a central billing computer for billing of said offer;

a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and pay per view offering identification information;

a card reader connected to said telephone for reading user credit card information;

data storage means in said telephone for storing said read credit card information; and

means connected to said telephone for offering selectable pay per view offering identification information to said user, said pay per view offering identification information being stored in said telephone.

17. The apparatus of claim 16 wherein:

responsive to said user input, said central billing computer validates said user billing and pay per view offering identification information;

responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructs said central distribution computer to offer said pay per view offering at said amenity location; and

said telephone communicates with said remote billing computer for said validation responsive to user selection of said offered pay per view offering identification information and said stored credit card information.

18. A method for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location within a facility, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution [computer] box within said facility, said central distribution [computer] box being connected without a public switched network to said amenity location for offering a pay per view offering;

providing a store and forward switch connected to said central distribution [computer] box and providing a telephone connected to said store and forward switch, said store and forward switch receiving and storing from said telephone user billing information and pay per view offering identification information;

responsive to said receiving and storing, said store and forward switch instructing said central distribution [computer] box to offer a pay per view offering selected by said telephone user at said amenity location.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said step of receiving and storing comprises:

 said telephone having stored therein user location information; and

 said telephone, responsive to user entry of billing information, forwarding both said billing information and said location information to said store and forward switch for receipt and storage thereof.

20. The method of claim 18 further comprising:

 providing a central billing service connected through a public switched network, for validating said billing information responsive to receipt thereof from said store and forward switch.

21. [From Claim 1] Apparatus for processing billing information through a private switched network telephone system for offering pay per view amenities to a user at an amenity device within a facility, the apparatus comprising:

a telephone at said facility and connected to said private switched network telephone system by a telephone line, said telephone for transmitting and receiving information on said line;

a line powered card reader connected to said telephone for reading credit cards and extracting billing information therefrom;

a power supply connected to said line and said card reader for converting power of said line to a power supply voltage with sufficient current to power said card reader;

a processor connected to said card reader and said telephone for controlling said card reader to extract said billing information from said credit card and for transmitting said extracted billing information on said line;

a billing computer connected to said telephone system for receiving and validating said transmitted billing information; and

a central distribution box located at said facility and connected without a public switched network telephone system directly to said amenity device for facilitating the offer of a pay per view offering responsive to said billing computer validation.

22. [From claim 2] A method of user access to movies at an amenity location, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution box connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a movie;

providing a central billing computer connected to said central distribution box for validating said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and movie identification information, wherein said user input of billing and movie identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;
offering selectable movie identification information to said user, said movie identification information corresponding to DTMF tones being stored in said telephone; and

responsive to user selection of said offered movie identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for validation;

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said central distribution box to offer said movie at said amenity location.

23. [From claim 2] A method of user access to movies at an amenity location, the method comprising:

providing a store-and-forward switch (SFS) connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a movie;

providing a central billing computer connected to said SFS for validating said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer through the SFS for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and movie identification information, wherein said user input of billing and movie identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;
offering selectable movie identification information to said user, said movie identification information being stored as selectable DTMF tones in said telephone; and

responsive to user selection of said offered movie identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for validation;

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said SFS to offer said movie at said amenity location.

24. [From claim 5] Apparatus for user access to movies at an amenity location, the apparatus comprising:

a central distribution box connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer of a movie;

a central billing computer connected to said central distribution box for validating said offer;

a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and movie identification information;

a card reader connected to said telephone for reading user credit card information;

data storage means in said telephone for storing said read credit card information;

means connected to said telephone for offering selectable movie identification information to said user, said movie identification information being stored as selectable DTMF tones in said telephone;

such that responsive to said user input, said central billing computer validates said user billing and movie identification information;

such that responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructs said central distribution box to offer said movie at said amenity location; and

such that said telephone communicates with said remote billing computer for said validation responsive to user selection of said offered movie identification information and said stored credit card information.

25. [From 8] A method for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution box connected to said amenity location for facilitating the offer to a pay per view offering;

providing a central billing computer connected to said central distribution box for validating said offer;

providing a telephone connected to said central billing computer for user input to said central billing computer of user billing information and pay per view offering identification information, wherein said user input of billing and pay per view offering identification information through the telephone comprises:

reading user credit card information with a card reader connected to said telephone;

storing in said telephone said read credit card information;

offering selectable pay per view offering identification information to said user, said pay per view offering identification information being stored in said telephone;

responsive to user selection of said offered pay per view offering identification information and said stored credit card information, connecting said telephone to said remote billing computer for said validation;

responsive to said user input, validating in said central billing computer said user billing information; and

responsive to said validation, said billing computer instructing said central distribution box to offer said pay per view offering at said amenity location.

26. [From 18 and 19] A method for user access to pay per view offerings at an amenity location within a facility, the method comprising:

providing a central distribution box within said facility, said central distribution box being connected without a public switched network to said amenity location for offering a pay per view offering;

providing a store and forward switch connected to said central distribution box and providing a telephone connected to said store and forward switch, said store and forward switch receiving and storing from said telephone user billing information and pay per view offering identification information;

responsive to said receiving and storing, said store and forward switch instructing said central distribution box to offer a pay per view offering selected by said telephone user at said amenity location;

said telephone having stored therein user location information; and

said telephone, responsive to user entry of billing information, forwarding both said billing information and said location information to said store and forward switch for receipt and storage thereof.

27. [From 20] The method of claim 26 further comprising:

providing a central billing service connected through a public switched network, for validating said billing information responsive to receipt thereof from said store and forward switch.